

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1 - 3. (Cancelled)
4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the validity status of the value bearing indicium is determined to be invalid if the value bearing indicium is not found in the validation information database.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein the value bearing indicium is a ticket.
7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein the value bearing indicium is postage for a mail piece.
8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein the value bearing indicium is currency.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein the value bearing indicium is a voucher.
10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein the value bearing indicium is a coupon.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 wherein the value bearing indicium is a traveler's check.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, wherein the step of generating value bearing indicium data using the validation information includes the steps of:

generating a message digest by hashing a first subset of the validation information;
generating a digital signature from the message digest; and
generating a bar code from a second subset of the validation information.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47, wherein the validity status of the ticket is determined to be invalid if the validation information is not found in the validation information database.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47, wherein the step of generating the ticket comprises the steps of:

generating a message digest by hashing a first subset of the validation information;
generating a digital signature from the message digest;
generating a bar code from a second subset of the validation information; and
transmitting via the computer network the digital signature and the bar code to the end-user's machine.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the message digest is generated using a secure hash algorithm.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the digital signature is generated using a digital signature algorithm.

19 - 39 (Cancelled).

40. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 49, wherein the validity status of the ticket is determined to be invalid if the indicium graphic and the validation information in the ticket is not found in the validation information database.

41. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 49, wherein the validity status of the ticket is determined to be redeemed if the indicium graphic and the validation information in the ticket and a redemption status thereof are found in the validation information database.

42 - 46. (Cancelled).

47. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a ticket to an end-user via a computer network, the method comprising:

providing a ticket server, the ticket server coupled to a validation information database;
generating a web interface by a distributor server coupled to the computer network;
receiving a ticket request over the computer network from an end-user's machine by the distributor server via the web interface;

generating validation information from the ticket request, and a link to an indicium graphic in the ticket server, by the distributor server;

transmitting the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic in the ticket server to the web browser of the end-user's machine, by the distributor server;

receiving by the ticket server the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic from the end-user's machine via the computer network;

generating by the ticket server an indicium graphic using the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic;

generating by the ticket server a ticket using the indicium graphic and the validation information;

storing the indicium graphic and the validation information in the validation information database, before the ticket is validated;

transmitting the ticket by the ticket server to the end-user's machine, wherein the ticket includes a copy of the indicium graphic and the validation information;

printing the ticket;

scanning the printed ticket using a scanning machine and receiving the scanned copy of the ticket from a remote terminal including the scanning machine, by the ticket server via the computer network;

determining a validity status for the ticket by the ticket server using the received indicium graphic and the validation information in the ticket, and the validation information database; and

transmitting the validity status to the remote terminal by the ticket server via the computer network.

48. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a value bearing indicium to an end-user via a computer network, the method comprising:

providing an indicium server, the indicium server coupled to a validation information database;

generating a web interface by a distributor server coupled to the computer network;

receiving a value bearing indicium request over the computer network from an end-user's machine by the distributor server via the web interface;

generating validation information from the value bearing indicium request, and a link to an indicium graphic in the indicium server, by the distributor server;

transmitting the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic in the indicium server to the web browser of the end-user's machine, by the distributor server;

receiving by the indicium server the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic from the end-user's machine via the computer network;

generating by the indicium server a digital signature using the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic;

generating by the indicium server the value bearing indicium using the digital signature;

storing the digital signature in the validation information database;

transmitting the value bearing indicium to the end-user's machine by the indicium server, wherein the value bearing indicium includes a copy of the digital signature;

printing the value bearing indicium including the digital signature;

scanning the printed value bearing indicium using a scanning machine and receiving the scanned copy of the value bearing indicium from a remote terminal including a scanning machine, by the indicium server via the computer network;

determining a validity status for the value bearing indicium by the indicium server using the received digital signature in the scanned value bearing indicium, and the validation information database; and

transmitting the validity status to the remote terminal by the indicium server via the computer network.

49. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium embodying computer program instructions for execution by a computer, the computer program instructions adapting a computer to provide value bearing indicium data to an end-user via a computer network, the computer program instructions comprising:

providing a ticket server, the ticket server coupled to a validation information database;

generating a web interface by a distributor server coupled to the computer network;

receiving a ticket request over the computer network from an end-user's machine by the distributor server via the web interface;

generating validation information from the ticket request, and a link to an indicium graphic in the ticket server, by the distributor server;

transmitting the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic in the ticket server to the web browser of the end-user's machine, by the distributor server;

receiving by the ticket server the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic from the end-user's machine via the computer network;

generating by the ticket server an indicium graphic using the validation information and the link to the indicium graphic;

generating by the ticket server a ticket using the indicium graphic and the validation information;

storing the indicium graphic and the validation information in the validation information database, before the ticket is validated;

transmitting the ticket by the ticket server to the end-user's machine, wherein the ticket includes a copy of the indicium graphic and the validation information;

printing the ticket;

scanning the printed ticket using a scanning machine and receiving the scanned copy of the ticket from a remote terminal including the scanning machine, by the ticket server via the computer network;

determining a validity status for the ticket by the ticket server using the received indicium graphic and the validation information in the ticket, and the validation information database; and

transmitting the validity status to the remote terminal by the ticket server via the computer network.